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Test: Coffee grinders

They all grind coffee, but which ones do it best?
Online 05/07

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Test: Coffee grinders

Test results for 13 domestic coffee grinders priced from $70 to $405

We tested for:

- Suitability of grind
- Operating the grinder
- Timing control
- Cleaning
- Adjusting fineness control

How are CHOICE tests different? We buy all the products we test — no industry freebies, no government funding. We're non-profit, we don't take ads and our work is funded solely by people like you.

Findings:

- Some burr type coffee grinders don’t grind finely enough for domestic espresso machines.
- A higher price doesn't guarantee a better grind or a machine that's easier to use.

Brands tested

- BODUM Antigua Burr Coffee Grinder 10539
- BREVILLE BarAroma Coffee & Spice Grinder BCG450
- BREVILLE CG12 Café Roma Coffee Mill
- DELONGHI KG100
- DELONGHI KG59

- GAGGIA MM 0400
- KITCHEN AID Artisan Burr Grinder 5KCG100
- KRUPS GVX2A2
- RANCILIO Rocky No Doser
- SAECO MC2002/MAC001
- STARBUCKS Burr Grinder EL60
- SUNBEAM Burr Grinder EM0430
- SUNBEAM Conical Burr EM0450

What else you'll get in this report

As well as the test results for 13 models you'll also get:

- **Recommended retail prices and features** for all models.
- **Invaluable buying information**: Practical advice and tips. Read this before you buy!
- **Tips** for storing your coffee.
- **CHOICE Shopper**: Buy a membership and get this exclusive members' service that can save you time and money on your purchase.

What to buy

What to buy

Brand	Price
DELONGHI KG100	$169
STARBUCKS Burr Grinder EL60	$185
SUNBEAM Conical Burr EM0450	$159
KITCHEN AID Artisan Burr Grinder 5KCG100	$379
BREVILLE Bar Aroma Coffee and Spice grinder BCG450	$170

What about the rest?

- The KRUPS and SAECO grinders ground coffee well, but weren't quite as easy to use as the recommended models.

- The BODUM, DELONGHI KG59, SUNBEAM Burr Grinder and the BREVILLE CG12 Cafe Roma Coffee Mill did not grind finely enough for domestic espresso machines. When we made coffee after grinding with these models the finest grind was still too coarse. This made the coffee weak in flavour without much of a quality crema on top.

- The RANCILIO ground well, but scored second lowest for ease of use and cleaning because it doesn't come with a ground coffee container, we also found that the locking mechanism on the wheel was fiddly to get onto the right setting.

- The GAGGIA scored the lowest for ease of use as small coffee particles fly out and make a mess when

the container is emptied. The GAGGIA hopper was also stiffer to rotate than the other models on test.

- The BREVILLE CG12 Café Roma Coffee Mill scored low for ease of use because the hopper lid lifts off when there are only a small amount of beans left in it and coffee particles fly out. We also found the wheel a little hard to turn.

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Results table

	Results							
Brand/Model	**Overall score (%)**	**Fineness of grind score (%)**	**Ease of use score (%)**	**Time to grind 30 grams of coffee (sec)**	**Noise (dB)**	**Number of settings**	**Automatic switch-off**	**Price ($)**
DELONGHI KG100 **www.delonghi.com.au**	92	90	93	44	74	16	•	169
STARBUCKS Burr Grinder EL60 **www.starbucks.com.au**	92	90	93	46	74	16	•	185
SUNBEAM Conical Burr EM0450 **www.sunbeam.com.au**	90	90	90	40	78	25		159
KITCHEN AID Artisan Burr Grinder 5KCG100 **www.petermcinnes.com.au**	89	90	88	20	73	15		379
BREVILLE BarAroma Coffee & Spice Grinder BCG450 **www.breville.com.au**	87	90	83	34	73	33	•	170
KRUPS GVX2A2 **www.krups.com**	83	90	75	38	77	17	•	149
SAECO MC2002 / MAC001 **www.saeco.com.au**	82	90	73	50	77	35		229
RANCILIO Rocky No Doser **www.mocopan.com.au**	74	90	58	30	75	50		405
GAGGIA MM 0400 **www.gaggia.net.au**	73	90	55	40	81	9		149
BODUM Antigua Burr Coffee Grinder 10539 **www.bodum.com.au**	68	50	85	32	76	12	•	189

DELONGHI KG59 **www.delonghi.com.au**	64	40	88	58	82	8	•	99
SUNBEAM Burr Grinder EM0430 **www.sunbeam.com.au**	54	40	68	22	79	17	•	79
BREVILLE CG12 Café Roma Coffee Mill **www.breville.com.au**	43	20	65	23	77	17	•	70

Table notes

The **overall score** is made up of:

- Fineness of grind (i.e. suitability of grind for making espresso): 50%
- Ease of use: 50%

Ease of use is made up of the following equally weighted scores:

- Operating the grinder
- Timing control
- Cleaning
- Adjusting fineness control

Price is recommended retail price as advised by manufacturers.

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What to look for + how we tested

What to look for

- A **burr style grinder** is the most suitable style of grinder for pump style home espresso machines. Burr grinders produce a more **uniform grind** than blade grinders. **Blade** grinders chop up the beans to various sizes and the fineness of the grind is only controlled by how long you grind. It can be easily overdone and you will end up with a floury consistency which could block the filter and even damage the pump.

- Burr coffee grinders are a **good investment** to use with your home espresso machine. Coffee **deteriorates quickly** after grinding, and you may find it won't necessarily be the right grind for your machine. A close inspection of some pre-ground coffee packets reveals claims that the grind may be suitable for **plungers**, **percolators** and possibly a **pump style** espresso machine too, which to us just doesn't sound right.

How we tested

- The grinders were adjusted to produce a grind fine enough for our BREVILLE Café Roma which we use as our reference machine. The same setting was used to grind coffee for the SUNBEAM Café Latte EM5600 which rated equal best in our last espresso machine test. We made two cups of espresso using Vittoria ORO beans and judged the crema quality and the strength of the coffee.

- We looked at **how easy** the grinders are to **clean**, how easy the **controls** are to adjust and the **fineness** of the grind.

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Tester's tips - grinding and storing coffee

Grinding and storing

- The jury is still out on the best way to **store** your beans; some industry experts recommend storing them in the **freezer**, others say the **fridge** is better while others say that storing your coffee in an **airtight container** in a **cool dark place** works well. See what works best for you; no matter which type of storage you choose it's a good idea to keep your beans in an airtight container and away from direct light.

- Grind only as much coffee as you need at a time. Ground coffee deteriorates quickly, so much so that some perfectionist baristas recommend discarding coffee that has been ground more than half an hour earlier.

- You may need to play around with the **grind settings** to suit your particular machine. If it's **too coarse** you'll get a poor flavour and crema, if the grind is **too fine** it can block the filter. Start with a grind size that is the consistency of **table salt** when rubbed between finger and thumb.

- Coarse grinds suit **percolators**, medium grinds are good for **plungers**, fine is for **filter** and **espresso** while extra fine is good for **Turkish** coffee.

- **Clean** the hopper and the ground coffee container regularly, coffee is an oily substance and can go rancid after a while.

Beans ain't beans – choosing the right coffee

- Try out **different brands** and **roasts** to see which you like best. Our in-house tester/barista swears by using **local beans**, which he believes to be fresher than those available from major brands in supermarkets.

- If you're feeling really adventurous you can buy **green beans** and roast them yourself — some people use a popcorn popper.

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Profiles - the best

DELONGHI KG100

Website: www.delonghi.com.au

Price: $169
Note: this DELONGHI model appears identical to the STARBUCKS Burr Grinder mentioned below.

Good points

- Grinds finely enough for domestic espresso machines.
- Comparatively quiet.
- Very easy to empty the ground coffee container.
- Timer switches off the grinding action.
- Easy to clean removable hopper and ground coffee container.
- Very easy to adjust the fineness control.

Bad points

- Nothing in particular.

STARBUCKS Burr Grinder EL60

Website: www.starbucks.com.au

Price: $185
Note: this STARBUCKS model appears identical to the DELONGHI KG100 model mentioned above.

Good points

- Grinds finely enough for domestic espresso machines.
- Comparatively quiet.
- Very easy to empty the ground coffee container.
- Timer switches off the grinding action.
- Easy to clean the removable hopper and ground coffee container.
- Very easy to adjust the fineness control.

Bad points

- Nothing in particular.

SUNBEAM Conical Burr EM0450

Website: www.sunbeam.com.au

Price: $159

Good points

- Grinds finely enough for domestic espresso machines.
- Very easy to empty the ground coffee container.
- Can grind directly into the filter basket using the grind-on-demand switch.
- Easy to clean removable hopper and ground coffee container.

Bad points

- Nothing in particular.

KITCHEN AID Artisan Burr Grinder 5KCG100

Website: www.petermcinnes.com.au

Price: $379

Good points

- Grinds finely enough for domestic espresso machines.
- Comparatively quiet.
- Very easy to clean removable hopper and ground coffee container.
- Very easy to adjust the fineness control.

Bad points

- Nothing in particular.

BREVILLE Bar Aroma Coffee and Spice Grinder BCG450

Website: www.breville.com.au

Price: $169.95

Good points

- Grinds finely enough for domestic espresso machines.
- Comparatively quiet.
- Timer switches off the grinding action.

- Easy to clean removable hopper and ground coffee container.
- Very easy to adjust the fineness control.

Bad points

- Nothing in particular.

This article last reviewed May 2007

Profiles - the rest

KRUPS GVX2A2

Price: $149

Website: **www.krups.com**

Good points

- Grinds finely enough for domestic espresso machines.
- Timer switches off the grinding action.
- Very easy to adjust the fineness control.

Bad points

- Beans occasionally get stuck in the hopper so the grinder has to be banged gently on the bench to dislodge them.

SAECO MC2002 / MAC001

Price: $229

Website: **www.saeco.com.au**

Good points

- Grinds finely enough for domestic espresso machines.
- Very easy to empty the ground coffee container.

Bad points

- Nothing in particular.

RANCILIO Rocky No Doser

Website: **www.mocopan.com.au**

Price: $405

Good points

- Grinds finely enough for domestic espresso machines.

Bad points

- Grind button has to be held continuously while grinding.

GAGGIA MM 0400

Website: www.shriro.com.au

Price: $149

Good points

- Grinds finely enough for domestic espresso machine.
- Easy to spoon out coffee from the container.

Bad points

- Comparatively noisy.
- Small particles come out at the right hand side of the container while grinding.
- Grind button has to be held continuously while grinding.

DELONGHI KG59

Website: www.delonghi.com.au

Price: $99

Good points

- Timer switches off the grinding action.
- Easy to clean removable hopper and ground coffee container.
- Very easy to adjust the fineness control.

Bad points

- Doesn’t grind finely enough for domestic espresso machines.
- Comparatively noisy.

BODUM Antigua Burr Coffee Grinder 10539

Price: $189

Good points

- Very easy to empty the ground coffee container.
- Timer switches off the grinding action.
- Very easy to adjust the fineness control.

Bad points

- Poor results for fineness of grind.

SUNBEAM Burr Grinder EM0430

Website: www.sunbeam.com.au

Price: $79

Good points

- Very easy to adjust the fineness control.

Bad points

- Doesn't grind finely enough for domestic espresso machines.
- Fingers can get access to the rotating grinding wheel.

BREVILLE CG12 Café Roma Coffee Mill

Website: www.breville.com.au

Price: $70

Good points

- Timer switches off the grinding action.
- Easy to clean removable hopper and ground coffee container.

Bad points

- Doesn't grind finely enough for domestic espresso machines.
- The hopper lid lifts off when there is only a small quantity of beans left, and ground coffee flies out.
- Fingers can access the rotating grinding wheel.

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